



Family and Relationships

Essay: time with older relatives

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you write.

1. What can teenagers learn from older relatives?
2. Why might families spend less time together now?
3. Should family time be encouraged or left to personal choice?

Exercise 6 at a glance

Write an essay, often for a teacher.
Present an argument or point of view.
Support ideas with reasons and examples.
Use a formal or neutral register.

2. Exam-style task

Your class has recently discussed whether teenagers should spend more time with older relatives. Your teacher has asked you to write an essay giving your opinion about this topic.

In your essay, you should discuss both sides of the argument and give your own view.

Here are some comments from students to help you:

'Older relatives can share useful life experience.'
'It can make family relationships stronger.'

'Teenagers are often busy with school and friends.'
'Young people should choose how to spend their free time.'

Now write an essay for your teacher.

The comments may give you some ideas, and you should also use some ideas of your own.

Write about 120 to 160 words.

3. Model essay

In many families, teenagers and older relatives do not spend as much time together as they used to. Schoolwork, hobbies and digital entertainment can make family contact less regular. However, spending time with older relatives can still be valuable.

One argument in favour of more family time is that older relatives can share experience and advice. For example, grandparents may tell stories about the past or help young people understand family traditions. This can strengthen relationships and create a sense of belonging.

On the other hand, teenagers also need independence. They may have school deadlines, friendships and personal interests, so it would be unfair to control all their free time. Forced visits may not lead to genuine conversation or respect.

In my view, teenagers should be encouraged, but not forced, to spend time with older relatives. Overall, regular contact is important when it feels natural and meaningful rather than like another obligation.

4. Explore the model: structure, argument and register

Work with the model essay. Underline, label or make short notes.

Focus	What to find	Done?
Essay structure	Find the introduction, argument for, argument against and conclusion.	
Content point 1	Where does the writer explain why family time matters?	
Content point 2	Where does the writer explain teenagers' independence?	
Own view	Where does the writer give a clear personal view in a formal or neutral way?	
Audience and register	Find two places where the essay sounds formal or neutral rather than chatty.	
Development	Find one reason, example or effect that improves the argument.	

5. Language from the task prompts

The task prompts can guide your grammar and content choices. Notice which language each prompt naturally needs.

Prompt	Useful language	Why it fits	Example from the model
why family time matters	benefit language + examples	You are explaining how family contact can help young people.	One argument in favour of more family time is that older relatives can share experience and advice / For example,...
teenagers' independence	concession + fairness language	You are recognising teenagers' independence and free time.	They may have school deadlines, friendships and personal interests, so it woul... / As a result,...
your own view	qualified opinion language	You are giving a clear view without sounding too forceful.	In my view, teenagers should be encouraged, but not forced, to spend time with older relatives / Overall,...

6. Build a clear essay

Notice how essay phrases help you organise arguments and make your viewpoint clear.

Job	Useful essay phrases
introduce the issue	This question is not simple. / Many people believe that... / It is important to consider both sides.
present one side	One argument in favour of... is that... / For example,... / This can help...
present the other side	On the other hand,... / However,... / This may cause...
show result	As a result,... / Therefore,... / This means that...
state your view	In my view,... / I believe that... / Overall,...
conclude clearly	The best solution is... / A balanced approach would... / ...without creating unnecessary problems

7. Vocabulary and useful essay phrases

Use chunks that sound natural for this task. You can also upgrade your writing with precise, formal or neutral phrases.

Purpose	Useful chunks / language	Add your own
describe family time	older relatives / grandparents / family contact / regular contact	
describe benefits	share experience / strengthen relationships / sense of belonging	
describe concerns	need independence / school deadlines / free time / forced visits	
sound essay-like	One argument in favour of... / On the other hand... / Overall...	
upgrade ideas	genuine conversation / meaningful / obligation / encouraged, but not forced	

8. Plan your own essay

Use the same task, or change the details to another school-life issue.

Section	My idea	Useful language
introduction / issue		This question is not simple. / Many people believe...
argument for		One argument in favour of... / For example...
argument against		On the other hand... / This can lead to...
my view		In my view... / I believe that...
conclusion		Overall... / The best solution is...

9. Write your own essay

Write a formal or neutral essay for the task. Discuss both sides, develop your ideas and make your view clear.

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10. Self-check and peer-check

Success criteria	What to check	Self	Peer
Content	The essay discusses both sides of the issue and gives a clear view.		
Essay structure	The answer has an introduction, organised argument paragraphs and a conclusion.		
Audience and register	It sounds formal or neutral and suitable for a teacher.		
Prompt-led language	The writing uses opinion language, contrast linkers and cause/effect language accurately.		
Cohesion	Ideas connect naturally with formal linking phrases such as <i>One argument in favour of...</i> , <i>On the other hand...</i> , <i>As a result...</i> and <i>Overall...</i>		
Vocabulary	Topic words and precise phrases, such as genuine conversation and need independence, improve the essay.		
Accuracy	Spelling, punctuation and sentence control are clear enough for the reader.		
WWW:			
EBI:			